Gender and Nationalism: Rethinking Basic Concepts

Fall Trimester 1997
Monday 1:40 - 5:20 pm
Seminar Room 208, 2d Floor Faculty Tower

The course is designed for anyone whose research interests concern gender studies and nationalism, whether from a humanities or social science background. All those who might want to incorporate a gender dimension into their thesis are particularly encouraged.

This course explores the ways gender informs our understanding of nationalism. Nationalism, as you all know, is one of the issues of moment that compels the concern of scholars and politicians alike, especially in its "ethno-national" form. But most of the discussions about nationalism neglect the issues of gender. This neglect is in part a result of the way nationalism is conceptualised within a traditional understanding of the political, an understanding which leaves little space for problematizing gender. This is one reason, no doubt, why Benedict Andersen's idea of the national community as an "imagined community" has become so influential in feminist analysis of nationalism. The imagined community -- a cultural artefact which creates bonds of identity and belonging -- opens up a space for considerations of gender.

Each week we will explore the usefulness of gender as a category in the analysis of nationalism, by exploring how nationalism is tangled up with all the knotty categories of population, race, class, gender, family, reproduction, sexuality, the body, and so forth. Basic concepts in gender studies such as patriarchy, the sex/gender dichotomy, the public/private dichotomy will also be covered. Wherever possible, specific examples of
the new scholarship relevant to gender and nationalism in CEE/fSU countries are incorporated into the syllabus.

Seminar Format, Class Readings, and Requirements

This course is designed as a seminar. Each week a short lecture will introduce the topic and the main questions it raises; the lecture will be followed by student presentations. There will be a seminar break and then discussion. Students are expected to participate actively in discussions (each student will receive a packet of the readings in photocopied form). Attendance in class is mandatory. Each student will make at least one class-room presentation. Attendance and the presentation account for 10 % and 30% of the final grade, respectively. Also are required 2, 5-7 page papers; topics will be assigned by, or in consultation with, the instructor, each comprising 30% of the grade. See the Notes on Papers for guidelines. First papers are due in class on November 3; the second on December 15th.

Week 1: What is Gender/What is Nationalism? (September 29)

A. Gender


B. Nation

Katherine Verdery, "Whither 'Nation' and Nationalism'?' Daedalus (Summer 1993): 37-46.

C. Gender and Nation

Week 2 **Framing the National Problem: Difference and Exclusion** (October 6)

**Biology, History, Politics**


Denise Reilly, "Does Sex Have a History," in *'Am I that Name?': Feminism and the Category of 'Women' in History* (Minnesota, 1988) pp. 1-17.


**Debate Problem: L'affaire Foulard**


Week 3 (October 13) **Coloring in the Lines: Race, Ethnicity, and Gender**


Psychoanalytic dimensions


Week 4 Constructing National Foundations: the Nation-State and the Space of the Political (October 20):

Citizenship and Rights


Peggy Watson, " Civil Society and the Politicisation of Difference in Eastern Europe," Das Argument


Post Nationalism


No class October 27 (First Papers due in class next week November 3)
Week 5: **Men on Film: Sexuality, Ethnicity and the Nation** (November 3) **First Papers due in class**
Film: *The Crying Game*

Week 6: **Nationalism and Male Sexuality** (November 10)

**Sexuality**
Michel Foucault, in *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1*, selections.

**Violence**

Week 7 : **National Bodies and Masculinity: Nation, Empire and Ethnicity revisited** (November 17)

Week 8 Nation and Motherhood (November 24)

305-339.

Week 9 :The Costs of War (December 1)

Self-sacrifice and citizenship


Week 10 The Sexual Violence of War (December 8)


Week 11: **Does the National Have a Gender?** (December 15) **Second Papers Due in class**


Film: **Henry V (Kenneth Branagh)**

Week 12 (Make up class, date to be agreed upon): **Class Presentations**